

Wild Times

A Free Publication of the Wyoming Game & Fish Department

Summer 2006

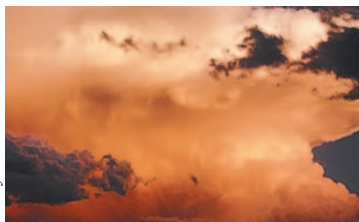
THE HABITAT CONNECTION: WYOMING IN THE SUMMER



LuRay Parker

Wildlife eat green grass in the summer to help them store fat for next winter.

This helps them store fat for next year's winter. But in Wyoming, the green grass has been short-lived lately because of a drought. Drought is a period where very little or no precipitation falls. Precipitation is water that falls to the earth in the form of hail, mist, rain, sleet, or snow. Think about the prairie where the pronghorn antelope live. The sagebrush, grasses and shrubs that grow are all affected by the amount of water that falls. If there is no water, then habitats, or the homes for wildlife, are affected. The food source they depend on may not live as long.



LuRay Parker

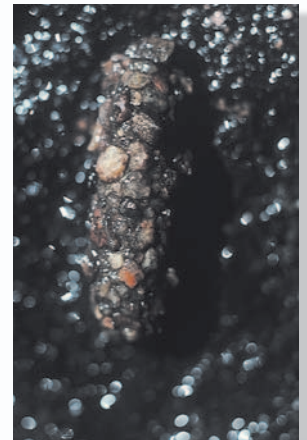
Take the time to notice the changes in the clouds over the seasons. This cloud will produce a summer thunderstorm.

Summer is finally here! Wildlife and their young are busy growing and playing and enjoying all the changes in their habitat since the cold, blustery days of winter. Green grasses and shrubs are growing, too. Wildlife eat these foods because they are high in nutrients.

Not only does drought affect the food sources for wildlife, but it also changes the cover. Plants provide cover, or places for wildlife to hide. Cover allows them to hide from predators, and it also shelters them from the sun.

Fish are affected by drought, too. Drought causes less water in streams and lakes. When water levels get low, the water gets warmer. As water temperature increases, there is less oxygen to breathe, and trout start to die. So it is important to keep water in the stream for the fish to live.

Drought can affect all habitats, or wildlife homes. Help conserve water at your school and at home to help wildlife. One thing you can do is to check all the faucets at school and at home to make sure they are not leaking. Leaky faucets can waste up to 50 gallons per day. If you find a leaky faucet, tell an adult so they can fix it. Things you can do to help conserve water include turning the faucet off when you are brushing your teeth.



LuRay Parker

Caddis fly larvae live in the water and grow into insects that fly in the air. Without water, they can't live.

Drought can cause water in streams to get low and even dry up.



WGFD

FIELD Wildlife Journal

A fish hatchery is a place where people called fish culturists grow fish to stock into streams, lakes, or reservoirs for fishermen

to catch. Fish culturists take fish eggs and care for them until they grow into fish that are large enough to be stocked. Some types of fish are becoming less common in the wild. Fish hatcheries grow types of fish whose numbers are going down. This helps increase the numbers of those kinds of fish in the wild. This is called fish restoration.

Things happening at a hatchery change every day. This is because duties change

as the fish grow. Some days you might be hatching, feeding or counting fish, and other days you might be stocking fish

in a lake for anglers to catch. That is what Travis Trimble, a fish culturist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department at the Dubois Fish Hatchery, likes about his job. Things are never the same. "Some days we are working with fish eggs, while others we are out stocking the fish in waters across Wyoming," Trimble says.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department uses different ways to distribute, or move, fish to different locations. Fish culturist Trimble says, "If we are stocking at a lake high in

the mountains, we might use horses to pack the fish in, or maybe a helicopter to drop the fish into the lake. But mostly we stock areas we can drive to so we use stocking trucks." In Wyoming, 85 percent of fish stocked are put in ponds, lakes or reservoirs, while 15 percent go into streams.

The Dubois Hatchery, where Fish culturist Trimble works, has recently undergone some changes. "Our hatchery was built many years ago and was starting to get old, so with money from the state legislature, we were able to make our hatchery almost completely brand new, and the fish are loving it! We can now grow many more fish than we could with the old hatchery."

Each hatchery in the state has different activities going on all the time. Wyoming has 10 state fish hatcheries. Can you find one near you? Summer is a great time to visit a hatchery!

If raising fish from an egg to a whopper sounds like fun to you, you should consider a job as fish culturist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Fish culturist Trimble measuring eggs.

Eggs are incubated in hatching jars until they are ready to hatch into fish.

Mark Gacke



Eggs are counted at the hatchery.

WGFD



The Wyoming Game and Fish Department uses trucks to stock fish.

WGFD



WGFD

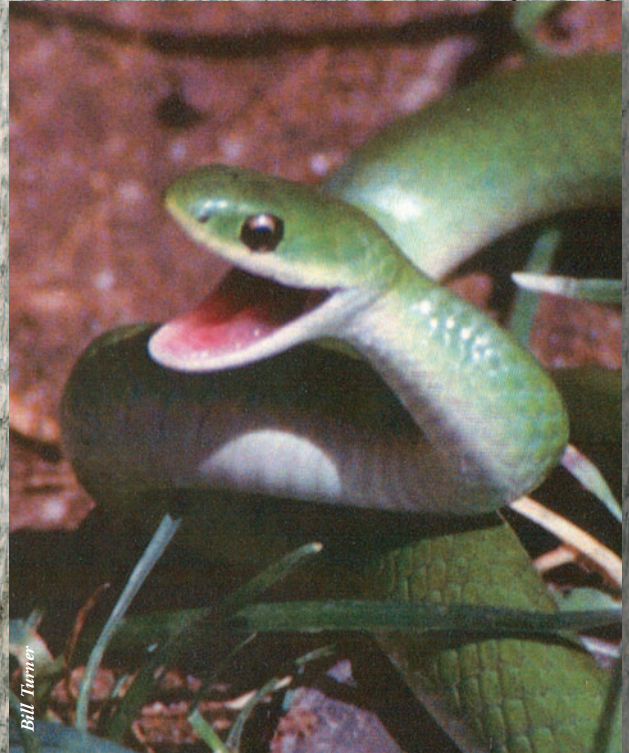


Al Gettings

WILDLIFE PROFILES



Michelle LaGory



Bill Turner



Dave Lockman



Greg Bergquist

WILDLIFE PROFILES

SMOOTH GREEN SNAKE

Opheodrys vernalis

Size: adult snakes can be as long as 16 inches

Eats: insects and spiders

Lives in: forest and mountain areas under logs and rocks

Have you ever seen the smooth green snake? Wow! It has a green back and a yellowish-green to white belly. This snake likes to stay in lush vegetation or green, tall grasses. If you are out hiking, don't step on the smooth green snake hiding in the grass! And no need to worry, it isn't poisonous. The smooth green snake lays four to nine eggs, usually under rotting wood, rocks, or even underground. These eggs take up to 30 days to hatch. The smooth green snake is considered a species of concern in Wyoming. This means the numbers of snakes may be declining. Biologists don't have enough information on the smooth green snake in Wyoming to know what is happening. Maybe you can study to be a herpetologist and find out what is happening to the smooth green snake.

ARCTIC GRAYLING

Thymallus arcticus

Size: usually 12 inches or less

Eats: insects and some small fish

Lives in: cold, clear waters of large rivers, creeks and mountain lakes

Doesn't it look like this fish could fly? But the large fin on its back doesn't help it fly, just swim. This fish may look strange, but it is in the same family as trout and salmon. This fish doesn't spawn, or mate, until it is four to five years old. During spawning, its sail-like dorsal fin, or the large fin on its back, is dotted with large blue or purple spots. The grayling is native to extreme northwestern Wyoming, but the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has stocked it in waters around the state. You could fish for this species in Meadow Lake near Pinedale.

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD

Selasphorus platycercus

Size: 4 inches long, 0.13 ounces (about the weight of two paper clips!)

Eats: flower nectar, insects, spiders, tree sap, and it visits hummingbird feeders

Lives in: open mountain forests and meadows

Did you know the broad-tailed hummingbird can fly backward, forward, sideways, up, down and even upside-down? When flying, a male hummingbird creates a high-pitched buzz that tells other birds it is there. This is so other birds know it is that hummingbird's territory. This little bird is important because it pollinates flowers while it is eating the flower nectar. The red flowers a hummingbird is attracted to are often not pollinated by insects. The bird builds its nests with cottonwood and willow seeds that are like feathers. The bird then holds the nest together with spider's silk.

LITTLE BROWN MYOTIS

Myotis lucifugus

Size: 3 to 3 1/2 inches

Eats: insects

Lives in: forests, areas around water in the mountains and lower valleys

The little brown myotis, or bat, lives in Wyoming year-round and is found throughout the state. It is seldom found far from open water, because it eats the insects that live near water. This bat is nocturnal, meaning it hunts for insects at night. It uses echolocation, or sound waves, to navigate and locate insects. Did you know a little brown myotis can eat 50 percent of its own body weight each night? In the summer, the little brown myotis roosts in a variety of sites, like tree cavities, loose tree bark, bridges and caves. During winter, this bat hibernates in caves and abandoned mines. It has a wingspan of 6 to 8 inches.

OUR Wildlife Heritage

LIFE WITHOUT WATER?

People and wildlife have always depended on water. It is one of the components of habitat that is needed to survive: food, water, shelter, and space. Water is not only important for drinking, but also for growing food. Water helps grow forage, or food, like grasses, shrubs, and trees. If there is a drought, the number of grasses that grow declines along with the nutrients they provide to the animals.

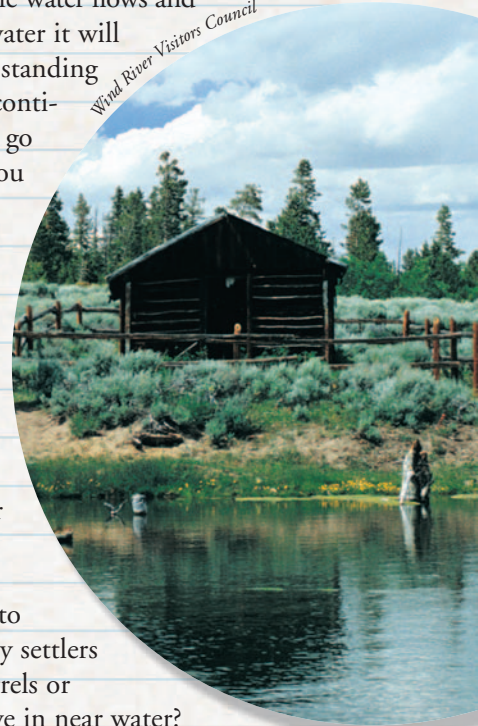


Forage, or wildlife food, needs water to grow.

Columbia River and found the Pacific Ocean. They crossed the continental divide on their trip. What happens to water on the continental divide? The continental divide is an imaginary line that crosses the mountains and plains that divides the direction the water flows and to which ocean or body of water it will go. For example, if you are standing on the western side of the continental divide, the water will go to the Pacific Ocean. Can you find where the continental divide is in Wyoming?

SETTLING DOWN

Early settlers made their homes around water, too. This was for several reasons. Wildlife was abundant near water, which they used for food, but also the settlers needed water to drink and to grow gardens or crops. Early settlers stored water in wooden barrels or buckets. Is the town you live in near water?



WHERE THERE IS WATER, THERE ARE PEOPLE...

Native Americans often camped near water sources like streams, rivers and lakes.

This is because the food they depended on also depended on water.

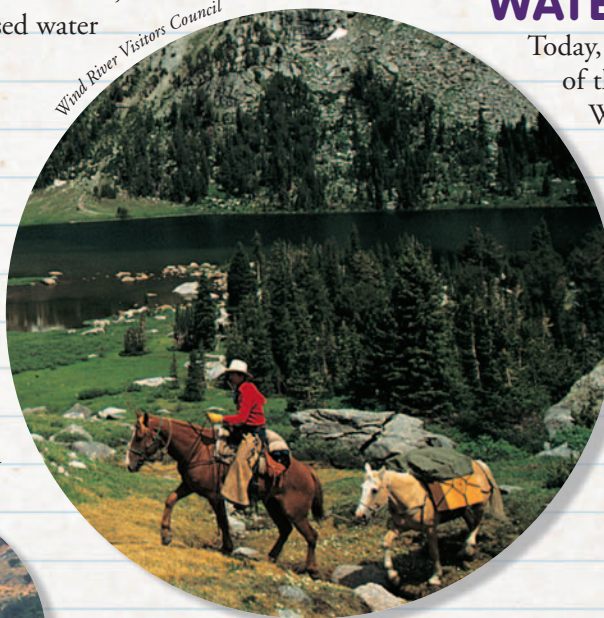
Some Native Americans fished and hunted for food, while others gathered plants. They also used water for transportation.

WESTWARD BOUND

Explorers of the west, like Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, navigated rivers to explore new land. In 1804, the expedition left St. Louis and followed the Missouri River to the west. On their adventure, Lewis and Clark saw a lot of wildlife that hadn't been seen before. They actually paddled in canoes against the flow of water. That must have taken a lot of strength! Lewis and Clark crossed the Rocky Mountains, went down the

WATER TODAY

Today, we rely on water for many of the same reasons as in the past. Wildlife still needs good habitat, which includes water, to survive. People use water for drinking, as well as to help grow crops for food. Can you think of activities you do today that people didn't do in the past that use water?



Around Wyoming

WHAT IS A SPECIES?

A species is a kind of animal. Each species of wildlife has characteristics that are different from all others.

These differences can be noticed in the horns, antlers, hooves, paws, claws and teeth, tail and/or ears of an animal. Other clues can be given by an animal's size, shape, color and habits.

For example, a pronghorn antelope is a different species than

an elk. A pheasant is a different species than a sage grouse, even though they are both kinds of birds.

Wyoming has many species of concern. These are animals that we need to take care of so nothing happens to them and they don't become extinct. Some need more help than others. They might have problems in the quality of their habitat. For example, the flannelmouth sucker, which is a fish that lives mainly in streams in southwestern Wyoming, has had problems in its habitat, like no water in the stream for it to live in. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will soon be doing more studies to help all of the species of concern in Wyoming.

Can you name the animals in the photos?



Mark Goeke



LuRay Parker

Pronghorn antelope and elk are different species.



LuRay Parker



Chris Madison



LuRay Parker

Outdoor Classroom

LuRay Parker



Have you ever sat outside and listened to the birds sing and the aspen trees quake in the wind? The summer in Wyoming is the time to try it. Write a poem or short story and send it to WILD TIMES. You can even keep a notebook or journal of all the birds, animals, fish and any other creatures and send it to us. We would like to know what you have in your area!

WYOMING WILDLIFE – OUR HERITAGE, OUR FUTURE!

BY CAMILLE ZENT
Shoshoni Junior High

I come from a place where the running rivers roar,
And the golden prairies cover the earth's floor.

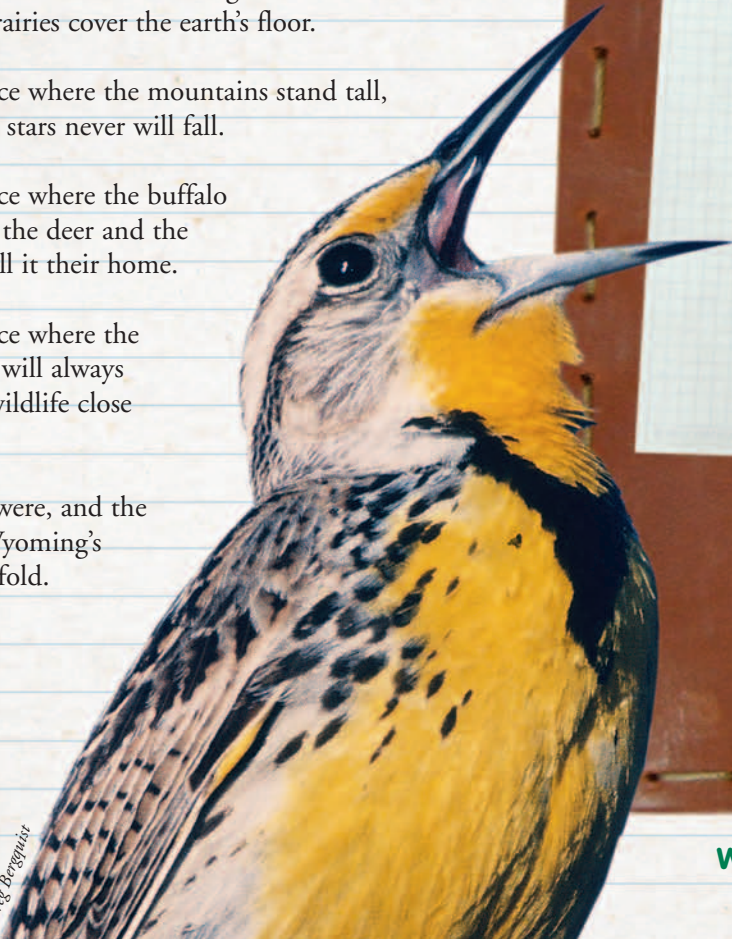
I come from a place where the mountains stand tall,
And the midnight stars never will fall.

I come from a place where the buffalo
would roam, And the deer and the
antelope would call it their home.

I come from a place where the
future is near, We will always
hold Wyoming's wildlife close
and dear.

For the days that were, and the
days to be told, Wyoming's
future is yet to unfold.

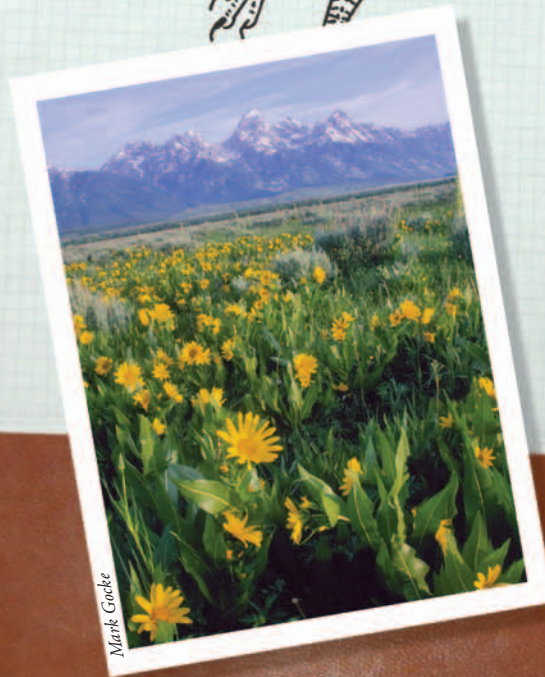
Greg Bergquist



Mark Gocke



I saw a sparrow
today,
April 15.



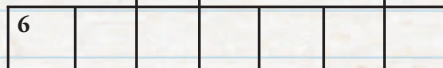
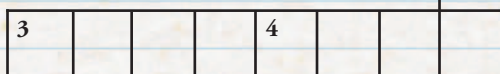
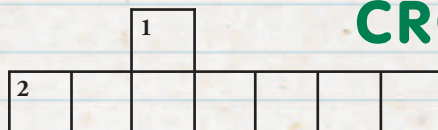
Mark Gocke

► TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ◀

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



LuRay Parker



Chris Madison

ACROSS

2. A kind of animal is called a...
3. Fish are grown at a fish....
6. When there is not enough precipitation falling it is called a

DOWN

1. To help conserve water you should fix your faucet.
4. Food, water, shelter and space needed for wildlife is called...
5. Lewis and Clark used this type of boat for transportation.

DOWN 1. Leaky 4. Habitat 5. Canoe
ACROSS 2. Species 3. Hatchery 6. Drought



► LEARNING LINKS ◀

The Expo is coming! The Expo is coming!



Janet Milek



Janet Milek

Have you ever wanted the chance to learn how to fish, shoot a bow and arrow or even a shotgun? If you answered yes, plan on attending the Wyoming Hunting and Fishing Heritage Expo on September 8th, 9th, and 10th, 2006 in Casper, Wyoming! You are guaranteed to learn all you have ever wanted about wildlife!



Janet Milek



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